

SB-55

A Bill to Address Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues and Promote Comprehensive Recovery
in the United States

IN THE SENATE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION BOYS NATION

Mr. Djour of Indiana introduced the following bill;

A BILL

A Bill to Address Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues and Promote Comprehensive Recovery
in the United States

Be it enacted by The American Legion Boys Nation Senate assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "The Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Act".

SECTION 2.FINDINGS

The Congress finds that:

Mental health disorders and substance abuse have reached epidemic proportions, affecting individuals, families, and communities across the United States.

Access to affordable and comprehensive mental health and addiction services is crucial for early intervention, treatment, and long-term recovery.

Stigma, lack of resources, and fragmented systems of care contribute to inadequate support for individuals struggling with mental health and addiction.

Addressing mental health and substance abuse issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, treatment, recovery support, and integration with overall healthcare systems.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Act:

"Mental health disorders" refer to conditions affecting emotional, psychological, and cognitive well-being, including but not limited to depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.

"Substance abuse" refers to the harmful use or dependence on psychoactive substances, such as drugs or alcohol, resulting in impaired physical, mental, or social functioning.

"Recovery support services" encompass a range of services, including counseling, peer support, housing, employment assistance, and access to healthcare, aimed at promoting sustained recovery from mental health and substance abuse disorders.

SECTION 4. EXPANSION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

(a) **Increased Funding:** Federal funding for mental health and addiction services shall be significantly increased to expand access, improve quality, and promote integration with other healthcare services.

(b) **Parity Enforcement:** Stricter enforcement of mental health and addiction parity laws shall be implemented to ensure equal coverage and benefits for mental health and substance abuse services compared to other healthcare services.

(c) **Telehealth Expansion:** Telehealth services for mental health and addiction treatment shall be expanded to improve access, particularly in underserved areas and for individuals with limited mobility or transportation.

(d) **Workforce Development:** Grants shall be provided to support training programs and scholarships for mental health and addiction professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, and

social workers, to address workforce shortages and ensure high-quality care.

SECTION 5. PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

(a) **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Education:** Comprehensive mental health and substance abuse education shall be integrated into school curriculum, raising awareness, reducing stigma, and equipping students with knowledge and skills to promote their own mental well-being.

(b) **Community Prevention Initiatives:** Grants shall be provided to support community-based prevention programs that address risk factors, promote protective factors, and reduce substance abuse and mental health disparities.

SECTION 6: EVALUATION AND REPORTING

(a) **Program Evaluation:** The effectiveness of mental health and addiction programs funded under this Act shall be evaluated periodically, and adjustments shall be made based on evidence-based practices and outcomes.

(b) **Annual Reporting:** Federal agencies involved in implementing this Act shall submit annual reports to Congress, detailing the progress, challenges, and outcomes achieved in addressing mental health and addiction issues.

SECTION 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

There is authorized to be appropriated [appropriate amount] for fiscal year [year] and each subsequent fiscal year to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid, the remainder of the Act, and the application of such provisions to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected.

SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act shall take effect [insert date] following its passage and enactment.

This bill shall be enacted as law upon approval by the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the signature of the President.